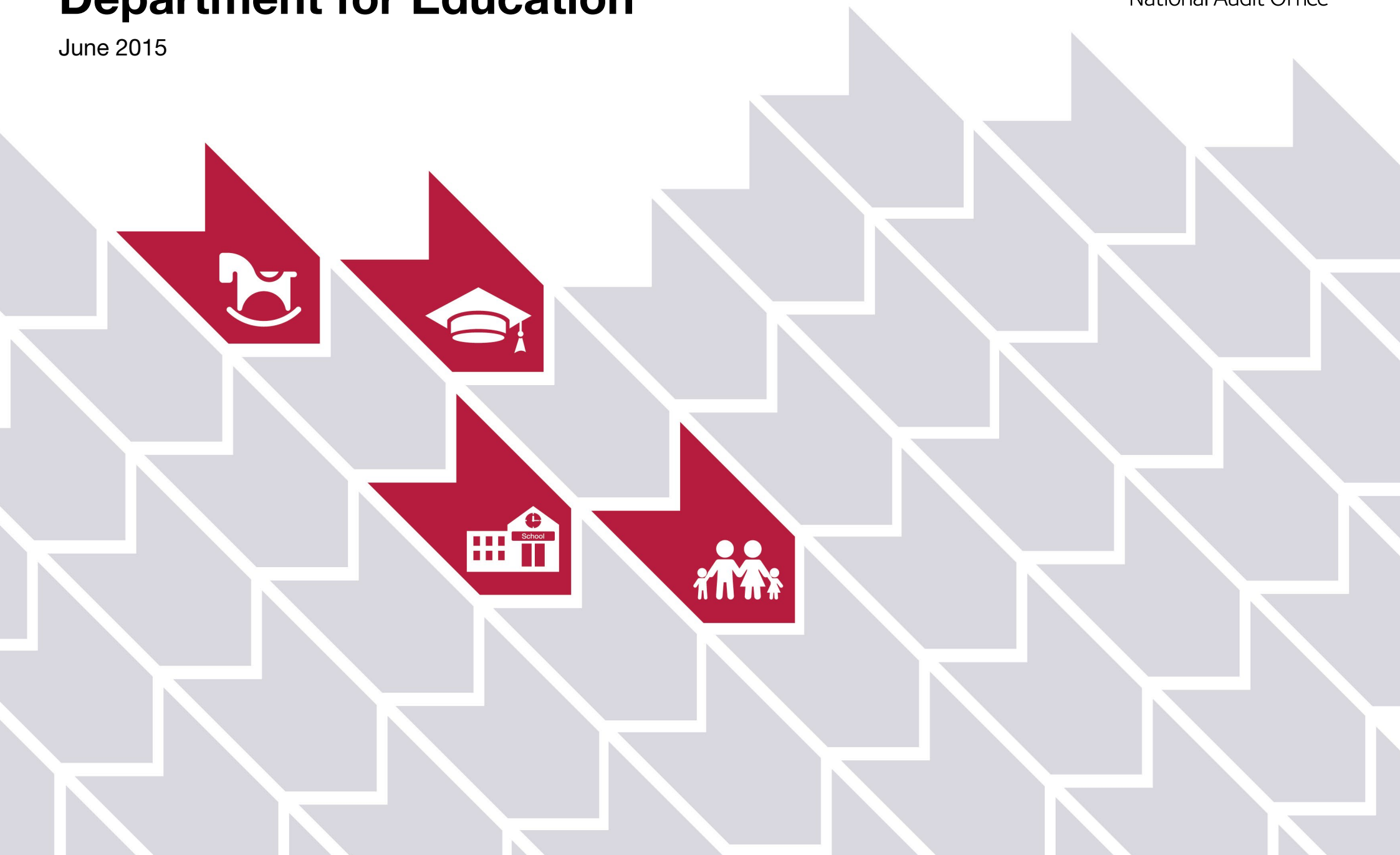


# A Short Guide to the **Department for Education**

June 2015



National Audit Office



| About this guide

| Contact details



The National Audit Office scrutinises public spending for Parliament and is independent of government. The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), Sir Amyas Morse KCB, is an Officer of the House of Commons and leads the NAO, which employs some 810 people. The C&AG certifies the accounts of all government departments and many other public sector bodies. He has statutory authority to examine and report to Parliament on whether departments and the bodies they fund have used their resources efficiently, effectively, and with economy. Our studies evaluate the value for money of public spending, nationally and locally. Our recommendations and reports on good practice help government improve public services, and our work led to audited savings of £1.15 billion in 2014.


**This short guide summarises what the Department for Education does, how much it costs, recent and planned changes and what to look out for across its main business areas and services.**

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## Key facts

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## Some notable facts in this short guide

The Department implemented a number of key **reforms** during the last Parliament at a time when it was **reducing** its own spending

### Financial context



**£17 million**  
reduction in net administration  
in 2013-14 compared with 2012-13



**60%**  
decrease in capital spend  
required by 2014-15 from 2010-11

### Early Years



**95%**  
take-up of the entitlement  
to 15 hours' education per week  
for children aged 3 and 4

### Vulnerable children



**5,050**  
new adoptions  
in 2013-14, compared with  
3,100 in 2010-11

### Schools



**4,580**  
academies open  
by 31 March 2015, compared  
with 203 in April 2010



**0.1%**  
increase to the schools budget  
in real terms from 2010-11 to 2014-15

### Post-16 education



**81.2%**  
of 16- to 18-year-olds  
in education and government-funded  
training at the end of 2013

## Key facts

The Department is responsible for education and services for children and young people up to the age of 19 in England. It oversees education in schools and colleges and children's services provided by local authorities.

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## Education system by phase

### Early Years (ages 2–4)

Early Years Foundation Stage

**150,000** 2-year-old children

**830,000** 3- and 4-year-old children

### Primary school (ages 5–11)

Key stages 1-2

Approximately  
**4.1 million** pupils

### Secondary school (ages 12–15)

Key stages 3-4

Approximately  
**2.7 million** pupils

### Further Education (FE) (ages 16–19)

Key stage 5, apprenticeships and training

**7,860**

Maintained providers of the free entitlement

**20,770**

Private, voluntary and independent providers of the free entitlement

**2,571**

Academies and free schools

**14,235**

Local authority maintained schools

**2,061**

Academies and free schools

**1,283**

Local authority maintained schools

**748,000**

young people in **429** FE, sixth form and other colleges

**452,000**

young people in **2,036** secondary school sixth forms

**116,300**

young people in work-based learning

### Note

1 School numbers are for mainstream education. Total number of academies and free schools is 4,835 (4,580 academies and 255 free schools), comprising 4,632 mainstream, 148 special and 55 alternative provision schools.

Approximately **12,500** pupils in 370 pupil referral units (both local authority maintained and academies)

**148,000**

young people not in education, employment or training (NEET)

## About the Department

### Children's services

Service	Responsible bodies	Children
Children looked after	152 local authorities	6,360 children in residential care homes 3,580 placed for adoption (awaiting formal adoption) 43,950 in foster care 10,510 placed with parent, relative or friend
Children adopted from care	152 local authorities	5,050 children adopted from care in 2013-14
Special educational needs (SEN) and disability	152 local authorities	214,650 children with statements of special educational needs
Safeguarding children	152 local authorities and multiple other agencies	All children
Careers advice	National Careers Service	Children aged 13 and over

## Key facts

Generally standards have been improving in performance measures at key stages, but there remains a wide gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers, and schools are having to provide extra places for growing numbers of pupils.

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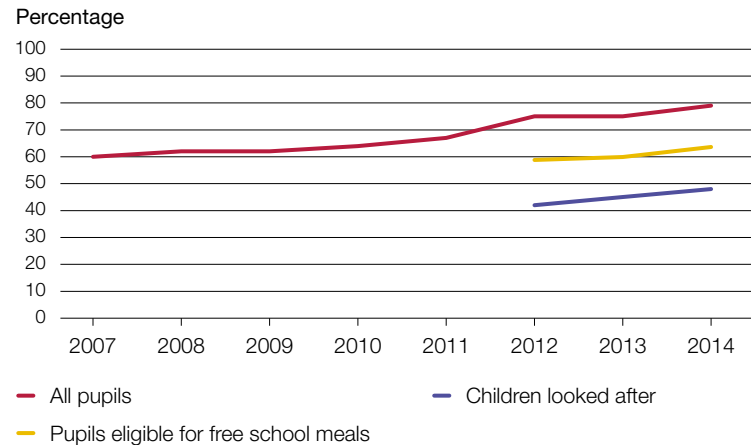
## Staff attitudes and engagement

## Major programmes and developments

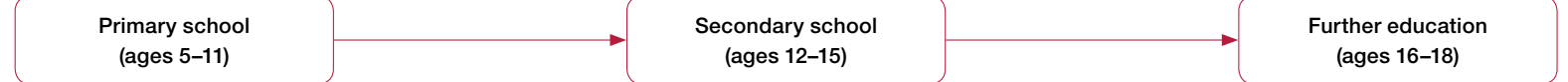
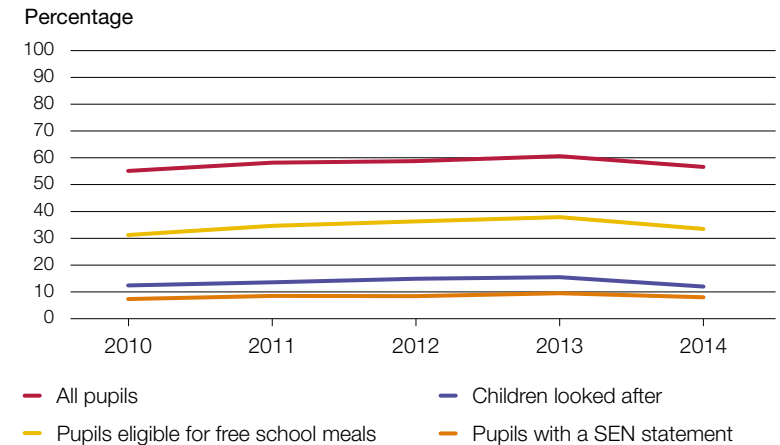
## Key themes from NAO reports

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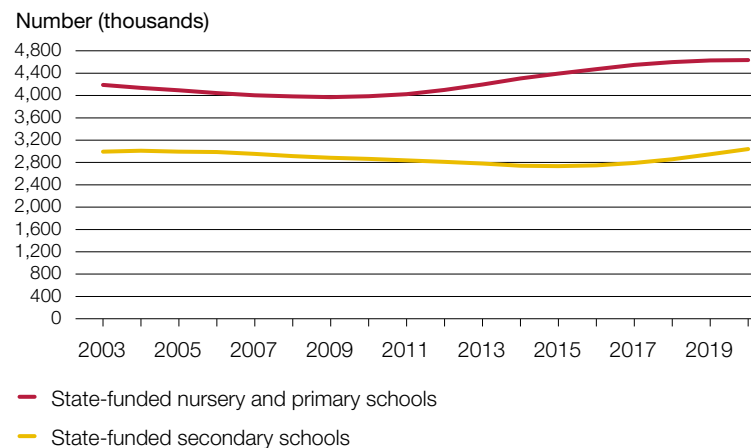
Percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in Reading, Writing and Mathematics at key stage 2, 2007 to 2014



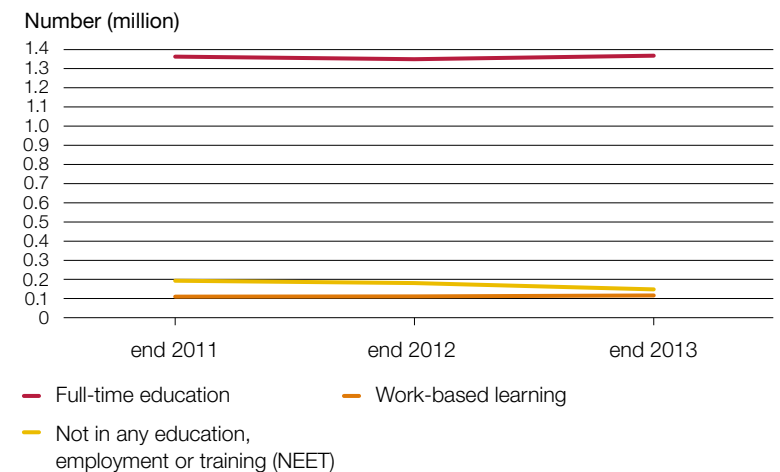
Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ GCSEs A\*–C or equivalent including English and Mathematics, 2010 to 2014



Total pupil numbers 2003 to 2020 (forecast from 2015)



Number of 16- to 18-year-olds in education and training 2011 to 2013



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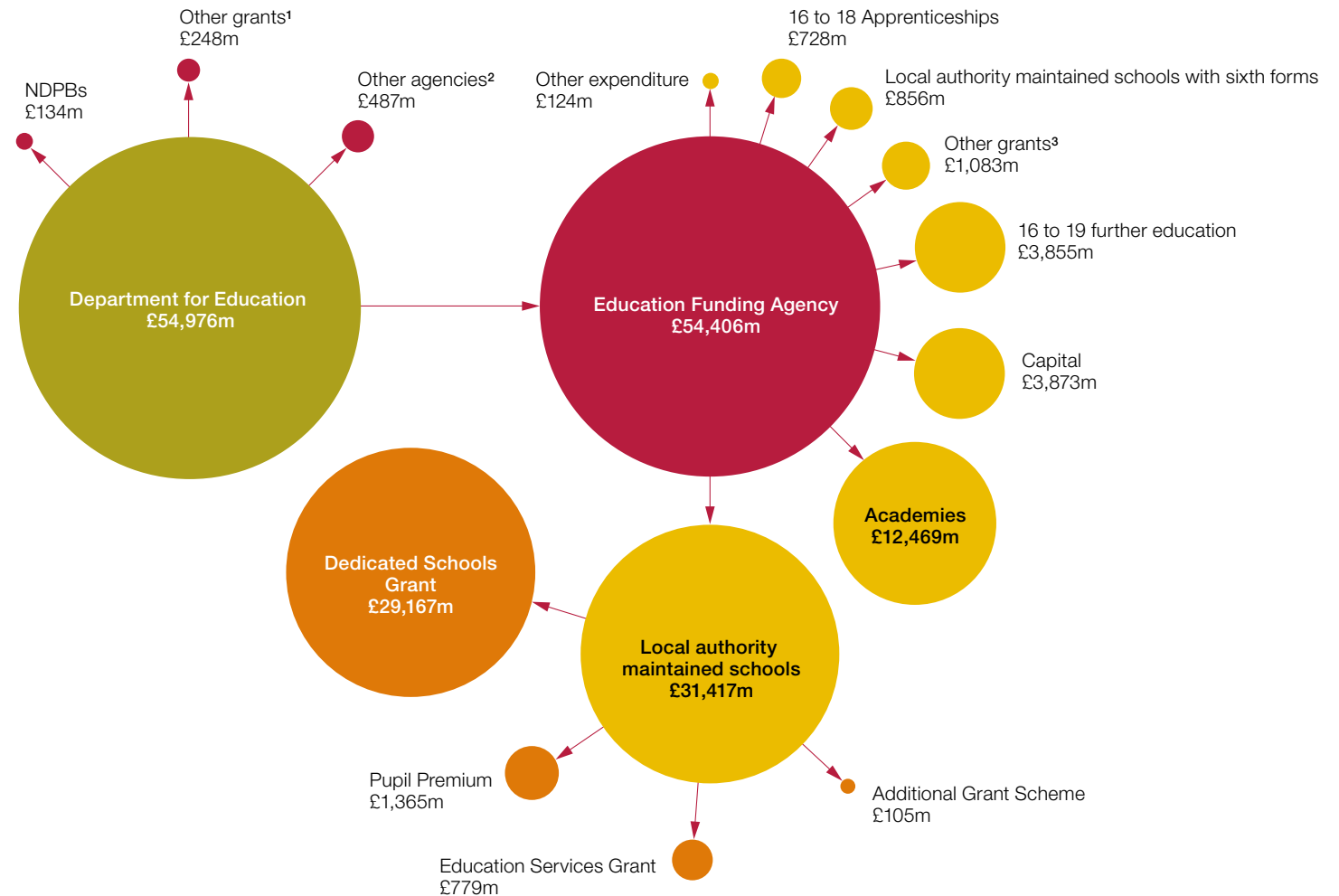
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### Department for Education expenditure in 2013-14



### Notes

- 1 Figure includes other capital grants, extended right to free home to school transport, family fund trust, music grant, music and dance scheme and other current grants.
- 2 Refers to the Department's other two executive agencies – Standards and Testing Agency and National College for Teaching and Leadership.
- 3 Figure includes youth contract, total bursary fund for young people aged 16 to 19 years, total learner support, literacy and numeracy catch-up grant, private finance initiative special current grant, adult learner grant, dance and drama awards and education in youth custody.

Sources: Department for Education Group and Education Funding Agency Annual Report and Accounts 2013-14

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Following the 2010 Spending Review, the schools budget was protected by a 0.1% increase in real terms each year, but the Department was required to make savings from the resource budget of 3% elsewhere by 2014-15.

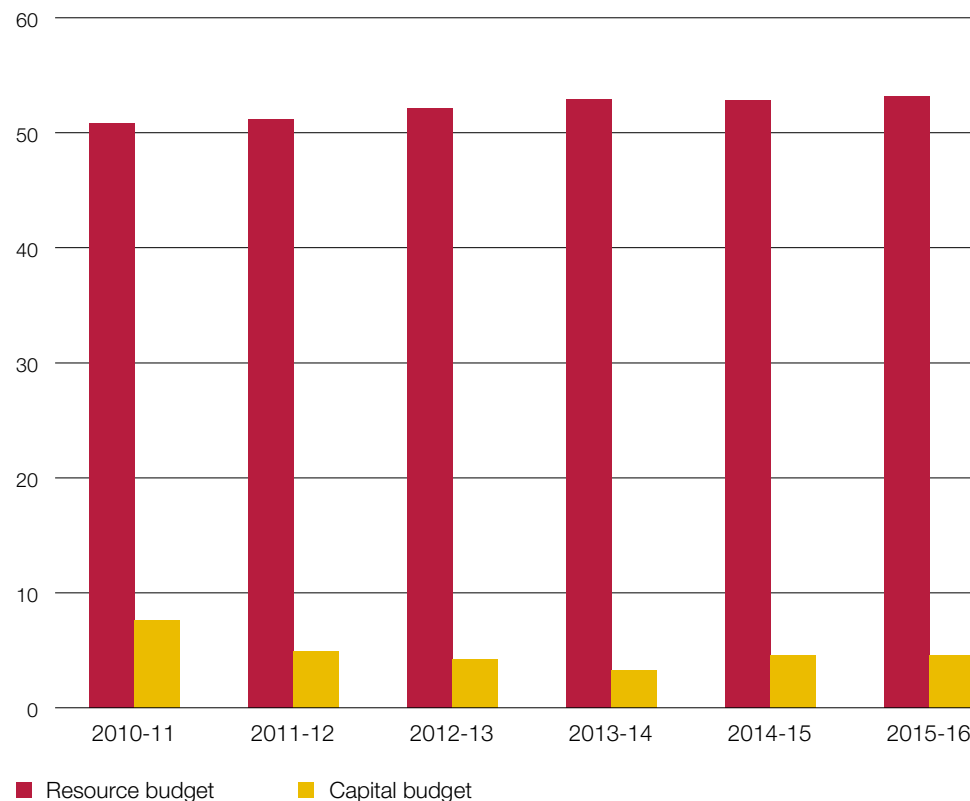
The Department was required to reduce capital spend by 60% in the same period, which it did mainly by halting the Building Schools for the Future programme.

The 2013 settlement protected the schools budget in real terms, as well as the Pupil Premium (funding for disadvantaged pupils). It also supported the continued expansion of academies and the creation of up to 180 new free schools, 20 new studio schools and 20 new university technical colleges.

The Department and the Education Funding Agency are expected to reduce the central costs of the academies programme by £150 million in 2015-16. In addition, the Department is making savings in its administration by £33 million in 2015-16, taking overall reduction in administration spend to 50% in real terms since 2010-11.

**Departmental budget for the Department for Education (net of income, excludes annually managed expenditure)**

£ billion



Source: The Department for Education, Consolidated Annual Report and Accounts 2013-14



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Excluding academy trusts (which employ 300,485 staff), the total staff number of the Department and its agencies and bodies in 2013-14 was 5,623.

The percentage of black and ethnic minority staff, women and disabled staff decreases at senior levels of the Department by an average of 12 percentage points, reflecting trends across the civil service.

## Department for Education staff breakdown

**99**

Standards and Testing Agency (STA)

**376**

National College and Teaching Agency (NCTA)

**842**

Education Funding Agency (EFA)

**1,797**

Non-departmental public body (NDPB)

**2,509**

Department for Education (DfE)



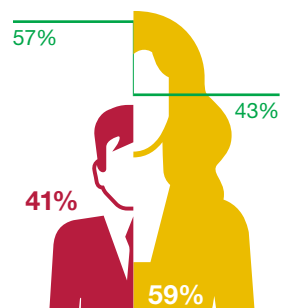
### Note

- 1 The non-departmental public body staff shown in staff breakdown are those employed on 31 March 2014 in the Children and Family Court and Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) and the Office of the Children's Commissioner. Some 1,700 staff were employed in Cafcass, whose sponsorship changed on the 1 April 2014 to the Ministry of Justice.

## Workforce in the Department for Education

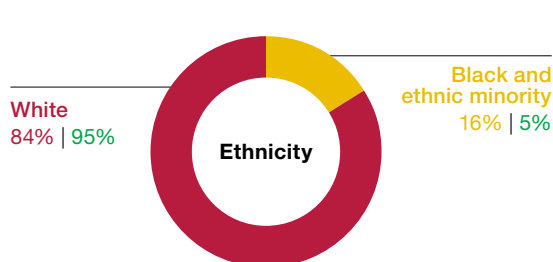
Gender – Whole Department

Senior civil servants



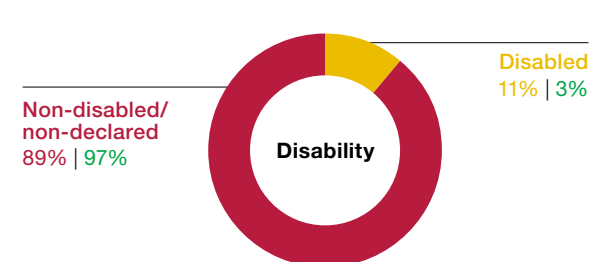
Ethnicity – Whole Department

Senior civil servants

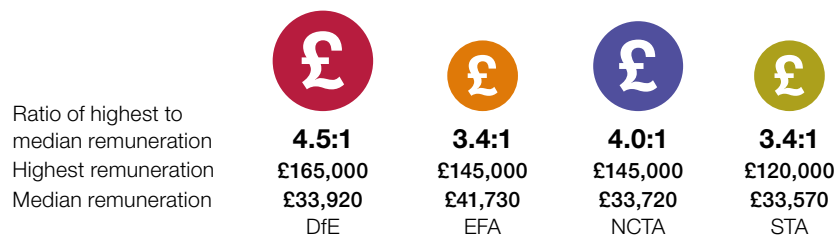


Disability status – Whole Department

Senior civil servants



## Pay median of directors



Sources: Department and agencies' annual report and accounts 2013/14, and Department for Education, December 2014

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The government has conducted its [Civil Service People Survey](#) annually for the past 5 years.

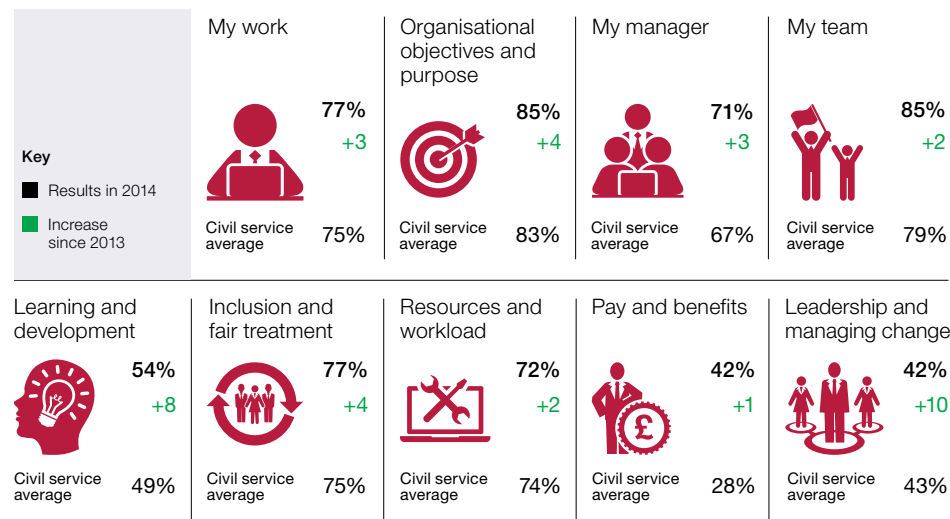
The most recent survey was carried out during October 2014.

The Department for Education scored higher in 2014 than 2013 for most categories, but still lower than the benchmark in resources and workload.

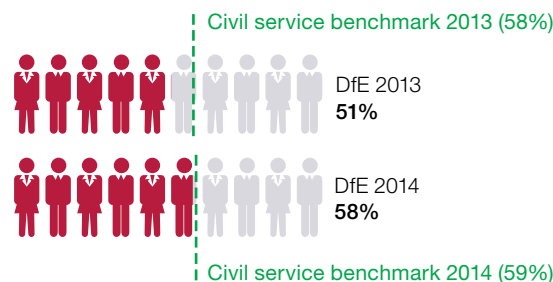
The main measure from the People survey is the employee engagement index, which measures an employee's emotional response to working for their organisation.

The Department's score has improved by 7 percentage points since 2013, and was only 1 percentage point lower than the civil service benchmark.

## Attitudes of Departmental staff in 2014 compared with 2013



## Engagement index 2013 and 2014



Sources: Civil Service People Survey 2013 and 2014

## Key facts

The Department has been reforming education and children's services, and the biggest changes have come in the schools sector.

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### The Department's aims

Increasing the quality and affordability of childcare in the Early Years sector to improve children's outcomes and create more opportunities for parents to work.

### Progress to date

From September 2010, 3- and 4-year-olds were entitled to 15 hours' free childcare per week.

This was extended to the 20% most disadvantaged 2-year-olds from September 2013, and to the 40% most disadvantaged in September 2014.

Reforming the school system to improve the quality of schools and create a self-improving school-led system by increasing the number of academies, free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges.

The Department has increased the number of academies from 203 in April 2010 to 4,580 by 31 March 2015 (20% of schools).

By March 2015 there were 255 free schools open.

The Department has committed to £3.6 billion in funding between 2015 and 2018, to provide more school places.

It ended the £55 billion Building Schools for the Future programme to rebuild all secondary schools in England, but has committed to rebuilding 261 schools by the end of 2017.

Raising the participation age until at least young people's 18th birthday to increase participation among 16- to 19-year-olds

At the end of 2013, 81.2% of 16- to 18-year-olds were in education and government-funded training, compared with 79.2% at the end of 2012. A further 7% were in jobs with no training and 4% were in training not funded by the government.

Simplifying adoption and improving the quality of care for looked-after children.

5,050 children were adopted in 2013-14 compared with 4,010 in 2012-13 and 3,100 in 2010-11.

In 2013 the Department committed to providing £16 million of funding to the voluntary adoption sector between 2013 and 2016.

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### Many education reforms have been delivered

16–18 participation in education and training: The proportion of 16- to 18-year-olds participating in education and training increased at the end of 2013 and the proportion of young people in this age group who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) fell, partly as a result of the legal change which raised the participation age to 18. Overall funding reduced.

Establishing free schools: The Department for Education has made clear progress in implementing its Free Schools programme by opening 174 such schools between September 2011 and September 2013 (255 as of March 2015).

### The expansion of academies and free schools increases the work of the Department and the Education Funding Agency but Departmental budgets are decreasing

Performance and capability of the Education Funding Agency: The Agency projected its customer numbers (academy schools) would increase by 50% between 2012 and 2015, and had a target to reduce administration costs by 14.6% in the same period.

### The Department does not effectively hold local authorities accountable for overseeing and delivering education and children's services

Academies and maintained schools: Oversight and intervention: The Department does not know enough about local authorities' oversight of maintained schools.

Children in care: The Department has prioritised adoption over children fostered or in residential care. Local authorities were less clear about the Department's objectives in these areas and the Department takes a less active role in intervening in local authorities' provision for children fostered or in residential care.

### The Department relies on Ofsted as a measure of quality but lacks other, more timely indicators of performance

Academies and maintained schools: Oversight and intervention: Ofsted data and educational attainment data are a snapshot of performance at a point in time, but do not provide a full and current picture of school performance. In August 2014, 15% of schools had not been inspected for more than 4 years.

## Early Years

# Policy objectives and roles and responsibilities



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## Objectives

Provide children with good-quality education and care in their earliest years, to contribute to equal opportunity regardless of background.

Enable families to work by providing affordable and easily accessible childcare.

Build a stronger and better-qualified workforce.

## Roles and responsibilities

The **Department for Education** sets the overall policy and provides non-ring fenced funding for taxpayer-funded hours.

It also sets the educational and development measurement framework (Early Years Foundation Stage).

**HM Revenue & Customs** repays eligible parents a percentage of childcare costs as tax credits.

**National College for Teaching and Leadership** sets the qualification criteria for early years educators.

The early years **workforce** includes: early years qualified teachers, early years educators (levels 2 and 3), nursery nurses, support staff and child-minders.

**Local authorities** are responsible for securing sufficient provision for the funded hours and also pass funding to providers.

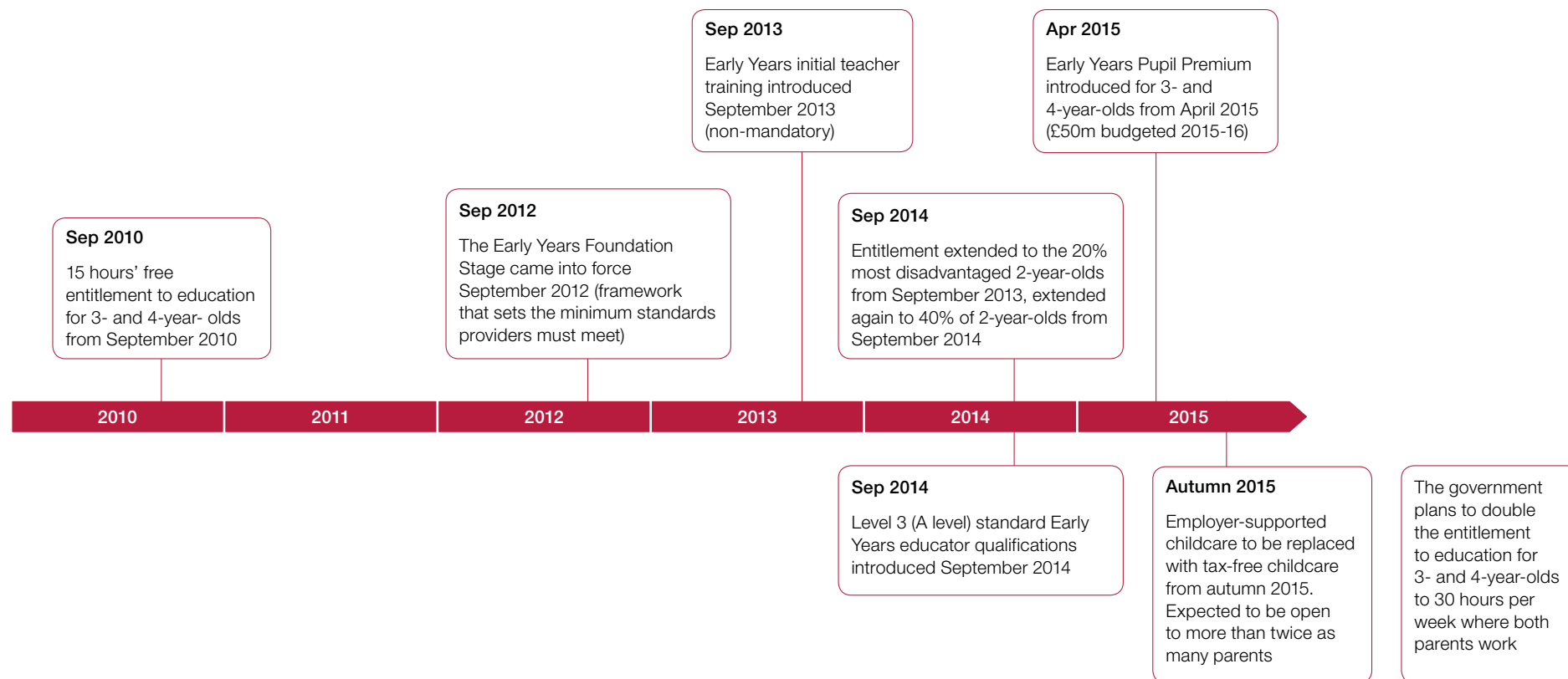
Early Years **providers** include: day nurseries, nursery schools, nursery classes in primary schools and pre-school playgroups and child-minders.

**Ofsted** inspects Early Years providers against the Early Years Foundation Stage and safeguarding requirements, and approves providers for its register.

**Parents** choose if they want to use any childcare, which provider and how many hours to use.

## Early Years

# Recent and future developments



2/3



## Early Years

# How much does it cost?

The Department funds local authorities for the free entitlement through the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), at 60% of the same unit rate per child as it funds schools per pupil, to reflect the 15 hours against 25 hours for compulsory education.

Local authorities determine locally how much to fund providers for the 15 hours of free entitlement.

## Things to look out for

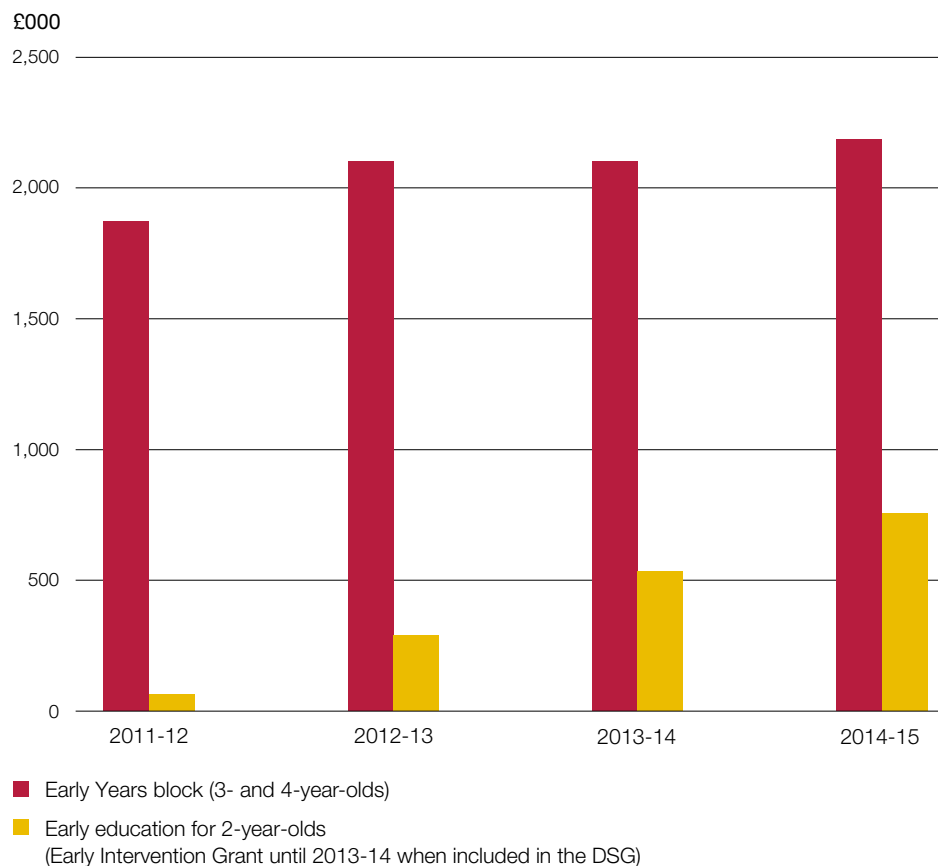
### Take-up of the entitlement

Take-up of the 3- and 4-year-old entitlement is high at an average of 97% (January 2014), but there is variation by local authority; from 75% in Camden and Kensington and Chelsea to full take-up in 21 local authorities. Take-up of the entitlement by eligible 2-year-olds is lower, with 55% taking up their funded places in October 2014.

### Outcomes

The average percentage of 5-year-olds who achieved a good level of development across local authorities increased to 60% in 2014, compared with 52% in 2013. However, the size of the gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and the rest remained at 19% in 2014 from 2013.

Funds allocated to the Early Years free entitlement



## Schools

# Objectives and costs



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## Objectives

Create a more autonomous and diverse school system that offers parents choice.

Ensure that every child has access to a 'good' or 'outstanding' school (as rated by Ofsted).

Ensure that every child has a place in a safe and well-maintained school.

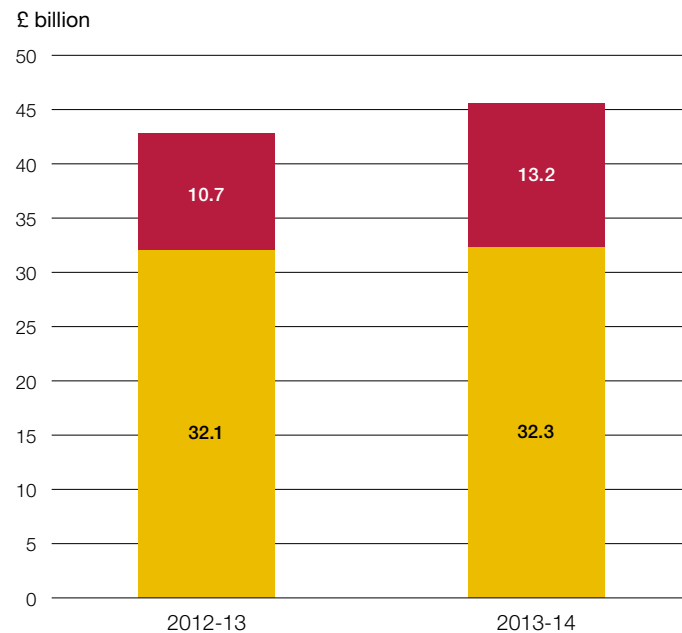
## Costs

The Department spent £45.5 billion on schools in 2013-14, £13.2 billion of which was on academies and free schools (up from £10.7 billion in 2012-13).

Academies receive funding on an equivalent basis to maintained schools in the same local authority area.

Academies and free schools received 29% of the total budget for educating children and young people in 2013-14 (up from 25% in 2012-13).

Spending on schools in England



■ Revenue and capital funding to academy trusts  
■ Revenue and capital funding to locally maintained schools



## Schools

# Academies and free schools

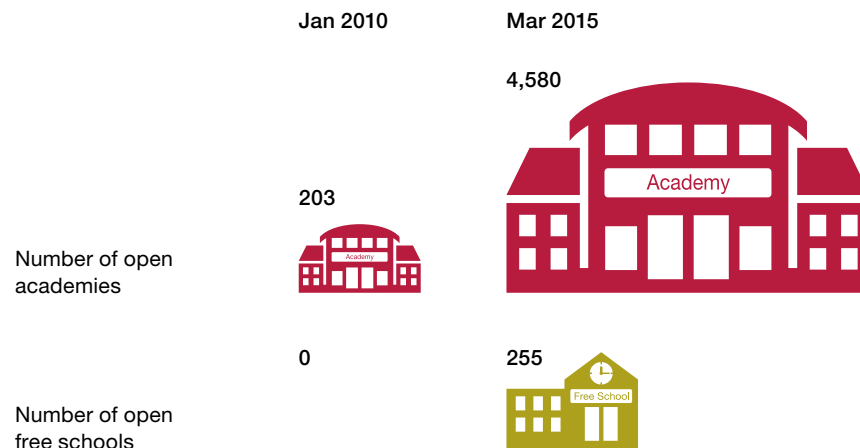
## How are academies and free schools different?

Academies and free schools are state-funded, non-fee-paying schools in England for ages 3–19, independent of local authorities.

- They operate in accordance with their **funding agreements** with the Secretary of State.
- They are subject to the same **Ofsted inspections** as all maintained schools and must follow the **Admissions Code**.
- They have greater **financial and curriculum freedoms** than maintained schools, for example to set staff pay and conditions.
- They must have their **accounts** externally **audited**.

Many academies are converter schools that were previously maintained by the local authority; others were set up with sponsors. Some academies operate as part of a chain – multi-academy trusts.

Free schools, university technical colleges and studio schools operate as academies and are entirely new state schools; although a small number were previously private independent schools. Free schools are set up following applications from a range of different groups including parents, teachers and academy chains.



**152**

**new free schools** already planned to open in September 2015 and beyond

Academies and free schools make up about

**one-fifth** of schools



Approximately

**35%**

of pupils now attend academies and free schools



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## Schools

# The school system – financial reporting

**The Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) issued a rare ‘adverse’ opinion on the Department for Education’s 2013-14 group financial statements, concluding that they are not true and fair, and that the level of error and uncertainty is both material and pervasive.**

## Key sources of error and uncertainty

The C&AG noted that he had not identified material inaccuracies in the underlying financial statements of the individual bodies making up the group (the Department, executive agencies, non-departmental public bodies and the academy trusts).

The main cause of the material error and uncertainty relates to the methodology used by the Department to consolidate the academy trust accounts. This includes using a number of data sources with different reporting periods and unaudited returns.

The evidence available to support the recognition of £31 billion of academy trust land and buildings was also limited.

## Regularity

The C&AG also qualified his regularity opinion in 2013-14 as the Department exceeded its annually managed expenditure (AME) limit authorised by Parliament by £166 million.

The regularity opinion on the 2012-13 financial statements was qualified on the basis that the Department’s control framework was not sufficiently well designed to identify whether academy trusts had complied with all aspects of HM Treasury’s Managing Public Money guidance. The EFA revised its framework of assurance over academies to ensure this qualification didn’t occur in 2013-14.

## Financial management

The Department faces significant challenges in how it will improve its strategic financial management and meet accountability responsibilities to Parliament, particularly with accounts which were published 10 months after the year end, cost £12 million to produce; and contain a material level of error and uncertainty.



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## Schools

# Challenges the Department faces in consolidating academy trusts into the accounts

**The largest, most complex consolidation in the public sector.** For 2013-14, there were 2,591 bodies consolidated into the Department's group financial statements. This includes 2,585 academy trusts operating 3,905 individual academies. Academy trusts' financial statements are required to be audited and published.

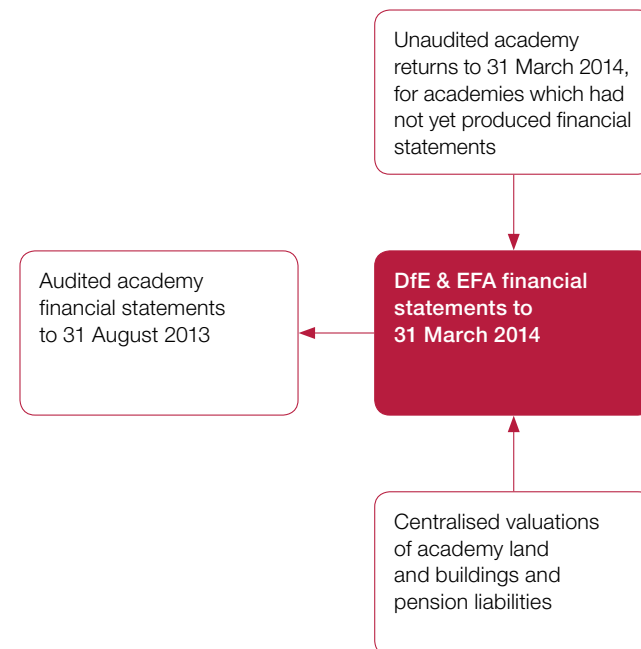
**There are different reporting periods** – academy trusts have a year end of 31 August, whereas the Department's year end is 31 March. International Financial Reporting Standards recognise that group financial statements may comprise bodies with different accounting periods but limits the allowable difference to three months.

**The Department took a number of decisions which resulted in them adopting a very unusual methodology for consolidating academies.** The Department has hypothesised that using academy trust financial data for the year to the end of August 2013, with some central adjustments, would not be materially different for the equivalent to the end of the following March.

**The C&AG's report noted that the current consolidation methodology is not capable of producing financial statements which are true and fair and which meet the accountability requirements of Parliament.**

The Department and HM Treasury are discussing how the current consolidation methodology could be changed to be made more sustainable and address the causes of the C&AG's adverse opinion in a reasonable timeframe.

## Department for Education's consolidation methodology 2013-14



## Schools

# Recent and future developments

## Oversight

The Department (with the Education Funding Agency) is responsible for the effective oversight of a set of bodies that is growing rapidly in number and diversity.

The Agency projected that the number of education providers would increase by around 50% between 2012-13 and 2015-16.

The Agency has introduced a more structured approach to its oversight and intervention of academies and free schools.

### Things to look out for

The challenge is to have the right information for routine monitoring so as to reduce reliance on whistle-blowers.

## School places

By 2023, the number of primary pupils is predicted to reach its highest level since the 1970s. From 2016 onwards the primary 'bulge' will start to feed through to secondary level, with an estimated half a million extra secondary pupils expected between 2016 and 2023.

## Regional school commissioners

In 2014 the Department appointed eight regional schools commissioners to provide greater oversight of academies in their area.

Commissioners are responsible for monitoring academies' performance, deciding on the creation of new academies and making recommendations to ministers about free school applications.

### Things to look out for

How the function of regional schools commissioners develops in practice and the impact they have on the school system.



## 16–19 education and training

## Objectives

More young people go on to study and gain the skills and qualifications that lead to sustainable jobs.

Fewer young people are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

More young people are involved in social action and feel they can make positive changes in society and in their own lives.

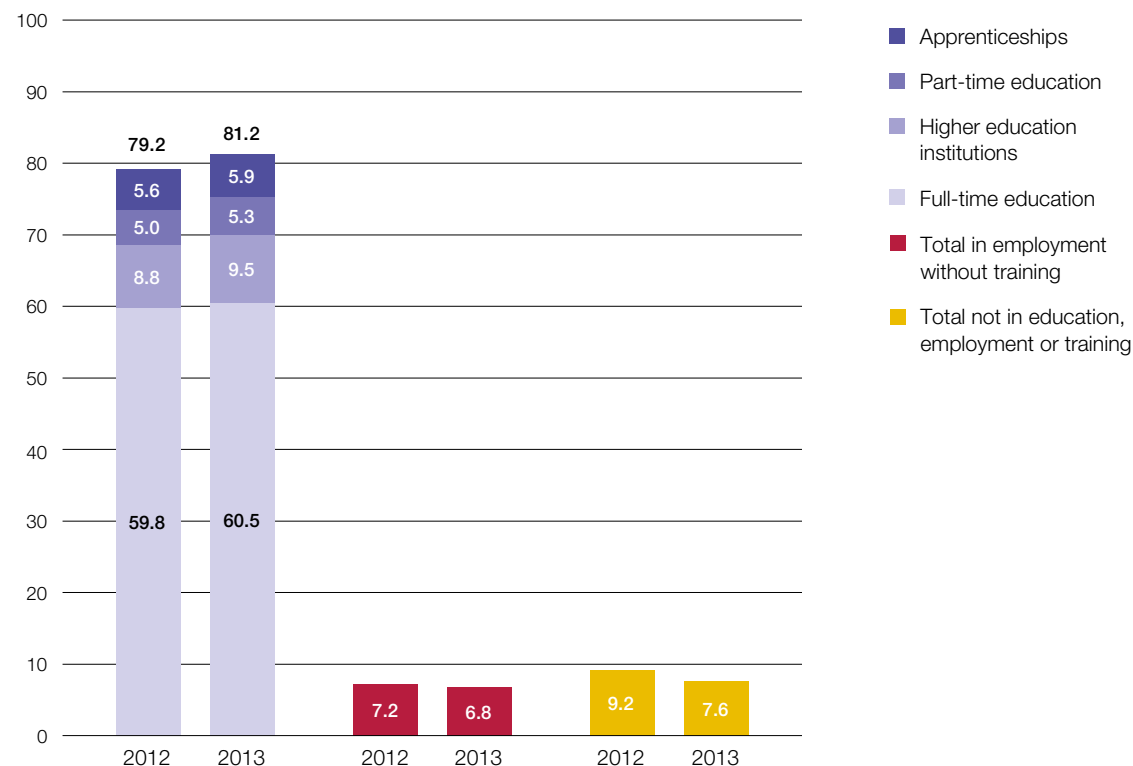
At the end of 2013, there were nearly **2 million young people aged 16 to 19 in England**.

**More than 80%** were in education and training – more than in 2012.

**148,000 (7.6%)** were not in education, employment or training – often described as NEET – fewer than in 2012.

Proportion of 16- 19-year-olds in education, employment or training, 2012 to 2013

Participation rate (%)





## 16–19 education and training

## Roles and responsibilities

The Department is responsible for the majority of policy and funding for 16- to 19-year-olds, while responsibility for delivering education and training is shared by a wide range of organisations:

**Department for Education**

is responsible for the majority of policy and funding for 16- to 19-year-olds. It sets national policy for and funds apprenticeships jointly with the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS).

**Education Funding Agency**

an executive agency of the Department, it issues funding for, and provides assurance about, spending on education and training, and manages the Youth Contract.

**The Skills Funding Agency  
(an executive agency of BIS)**

is responsible for delivering apprenticeships, including allocating funding to apprenticeship providers and for the delivery of the National Apprenticeship Service. BIS also funds the National Careers Service.

**Ofsted**

inspects education and training providers, including schools' provision of careers advice and guidance.

**Schools, sixth form colleges, further education colleges, commercial and charitable providers, and employers**

educate and train young people, and distribute financial support to them. Schools and colleges have the additional duty to provide independent careers guidance.

**Local authorities**

have statutory duties to secure sufficient suitable education and training for all young people in their area, and to support participation, including by identifying young people who are NEET. Authorities use different ways to engage young people, to support their participation. They fund their own initiatives aimed at helping young people stay in, or re-engage with, education or training.





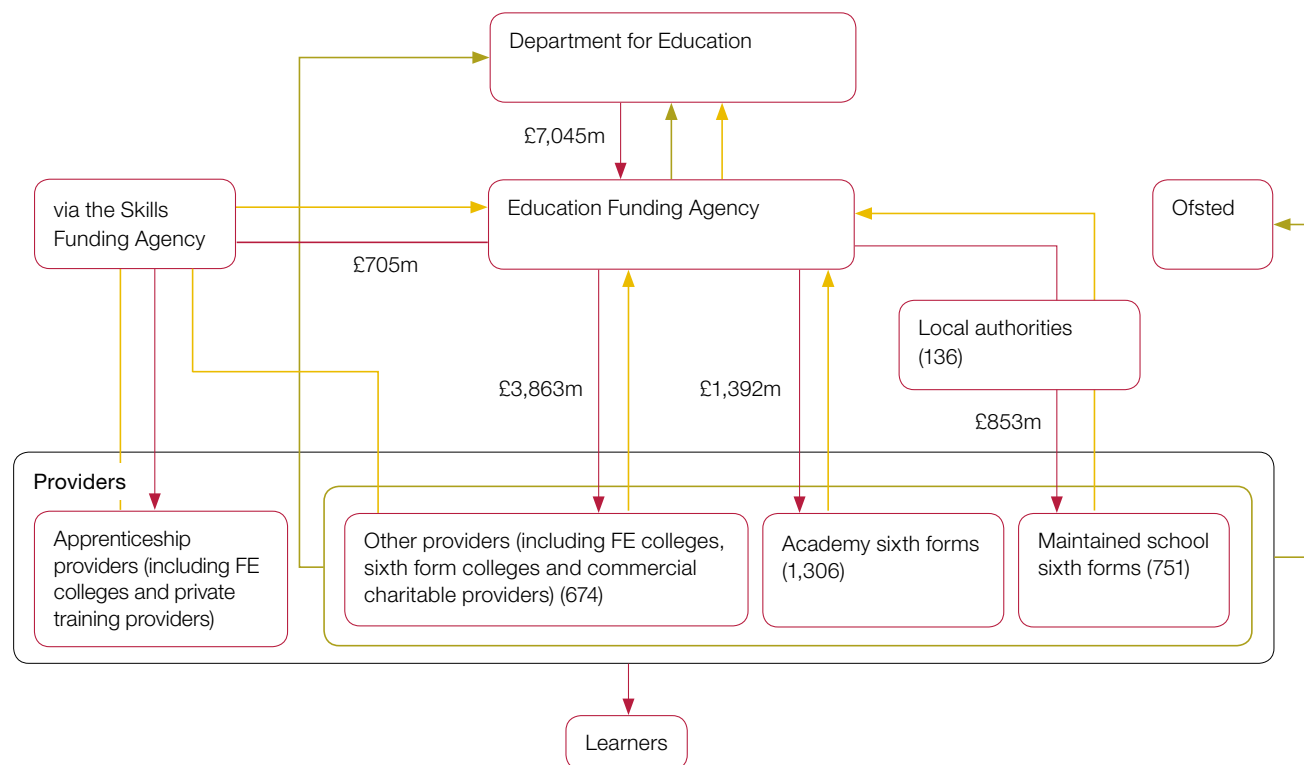
## 16-19 education and training

## How much does it cost?

In 2013-14, the Department allocated some **£7 billion** towards funding young people's education and training and reforms, mostly to pay for teaching but also including:

- **£700 million** on apprenticeship reforms.
- **£180 million** on the 16-19 Bursary Fund.
- **£44 million** on financial support through the Care to Learn grant; Dance and Drama Awards; the Residential Bursary and Residential Support grants.

## Responsibilities for 16- to 18-year-old education and training, and funding allocated for 2013-14



→ Funding

→ Financial management assurance

→ Academic assurance (via exam results and inspection reports)

Source: Comptroller and Auditor General, *16- to 18-year-old participation in education and training*, Session 2014-15, HC 624, National Audit Office, September 2014

## 16–19 education and training

# Recent and future developments

### Initiative

#### Legislation

In summer 2013, students who left year 11 had to continue in education or training for at least another year, and students who left year 11 in summer 2014 had to continue until their 18th birthday.

#### Reforms

Traineeships are designed to prepare young people for apprenticeships or work. They last between 6 weeks and 6 months, and include work preparation training, English and maths and a high-quality work placement.

Schools now have a statutory duty to provide independent careers advice and guidance. In addition, the Department provides funding to the National Careers Service, which has a helpline and website for young people.

The Education Maintenance Allowance has been replaced with the 16–19 Bursary Fund. Schools and training providers distribute this money to young people to pay for clothing, books and other equipment or for transport and food.

Youth Contract – Schools and training providers have been offered payments of £1,768 per young person to help children at risk of dropping out of education or training between ages 16 and 19.

Apprenticeships should last for 12 months or longer and offer Maths and English to learners who did not get grade Cs in these subjects at GCSE. By 2017/18, all apprenticeships will be based on standards designed by employers and funding will be routed through employers rather than providers.

### What to look out for

Whether schools, colleges and private training providers are offering learners a tailored programme based on prior attainment and career aspirations.

Government's intention to replace Jobseeker's Allowance for 18- 21-year-olds with a 6-month Youth Allowance, followed by mandatory apprenticeships, traineeships or community work.

How well these services are being commissioned by schools and used by pupils.

The equality and effective distribution of public funds to young people in greatest need of support.

The expansion of the programme to deliver more apprenticeships.



## Vulnerable children and young people

# Policy objectives

### Adoption

**Increasing the supply of adopters** – by improving recruitment and approval processes and supporting change in the market structure.

**Speeding up the adoption process** – by tackling delays in decision-making, court proceedings and matching children with suitable adoptive parents.

**Improving adoption support** – making sure that children and adoptive families have access to the support services they need.

### Children looked after

**Improving the quality of care** – with appointed ‘virtual’ school heads in every council to oversee early interventions for children in care and those on the edge of being placed in care.

**Improving the stability and quality of long-term foster placements** – by giving foster carers the training and support they need, and monitoring local authority data.

**Improving the quality of care in children’s homes** – by holding local authorities to account with public data and exploring new ways of commissioning care placements.

### Special educational needs (SEN) and disability

**Improving the support system** – by improving assessment processes, replacing statements with education, health and care plans and introducing personal budgets.

**Improving educational provision** – by replacing School Action and School Action Plus with SEN support in nurseries, schools and colleges, and funding degree-level specialists.

**Helping young people prepare for adulthood** – through supported internships.

## Vulnerable children and young people

### Children looked after and adoption

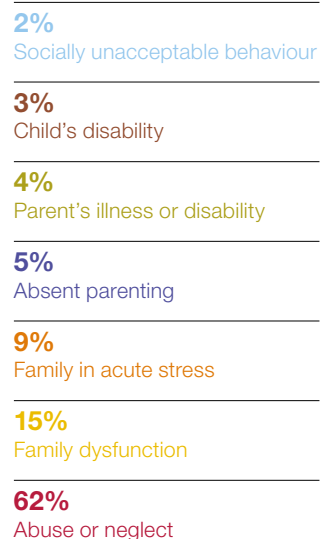
- There were **68,110** children in care on 31 March 2013 – the highest level since 1994.
- **62%** of children in care were in care because of abuse or neglect.
- **75%** of children in care were fostered.
- **£2.5 billion** was spent supporting children in foster and residential care in 2012-13.

The number of new adoptions increased from 4,010 in the 12 months before March 2013 to **5,050** in 2013-14.

**70%** of the children adopted in 2012-13 had previously suffered abuse or neglect.

In 2013-14, the average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family was **594** days.

Main reason for children being looked after, 31 March 2013



Number of new adoptions (year ending March)





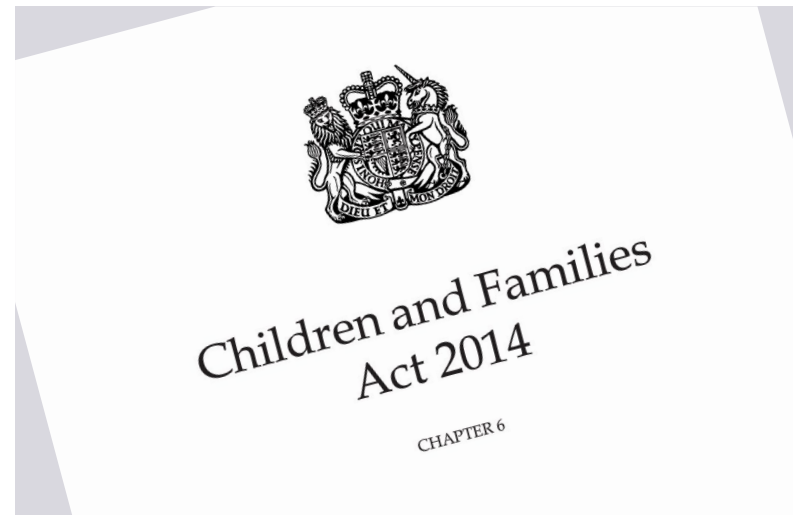
## Vulnerable children and young people

# Special educational needs and disability

In the previous Parliament, government introduced a number of reforms aimed at improving support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. A number of these reforms were made through the Children and Families Act 2014.

Particular steps taken include:

- introducing a **co-ordinated assessment process** to determine a child or young person's needs across education, health and care;
- replacing statements of special needs and learning difficulty assessments with an **education, health and care plan** for children and young people with complex needs; and
- ensuring all state-funded schools and colleges are brought into the support system for children with special educational needs and disabilities.





## Vulnerable children and young people

### Children in care

#### What are the things to look out for?

- Unless their needs are correctly assessed and met effectively, there are significant long-term costs of children not getting the right care.
- Demand for care is increasing, particularly in some areas, creating pressure.
- Our work in 2014 showed that local authorities are finding it harder to assess the needs of children in care and the demand for care.
  - We also found that local authorities often base decisions about children's placements on short-term affordability rather than on plans to best meet the child's needs.
- The Department's objective is to improve the quality of care but it has no indicators that accurately measure the efficacy of the care system.
- We found that there had been no improvement in getting children into the right placement and closer to home.



## Vulnerable children and young people

# Relevant legislation introduced in the Queen's speech 27 May 2015

The **Childcare Bill** would:

- increase the entitlement to free childcare to 30 hours a week for working parents of 3- and 4-year-olds; and
- require local authorities to publish information about childcare in the local area.

It aims to:

- “help hard-working families with the costs of childcare and support parents in work”; and
- “help ensure that parents are able to access information about the additional free childcare being introduced...”.

The **Education and Adoption Bill** would:

- increase the powers of Regional Schools Commissioners to “bring in leadership support from other excellent schools and heads”, remove barriers to schools becoming academies and bring in new criteria for ‘coasting’ schools (schools that have “shown a prolonged period of mediocre performance and insufficient pupil progress”), which will be “eligible for academisation”; and
- allow the Secretary of State to direct local authorities to move “any or all of their adoption functions” to a specified local authority or agency.

It aims to:

- speed up intervention in ‘failing’ schools and intervene in ‘coasting’ schools; and
- introduce regional adoption agencies that work across local authorities and “match children without delay”.



# Appendix One

## Related bodies

### Ofqual

A non-ministerial department which regulates qualifications, examinations and assessments in England.

### Ofsted

A non-ministerial department which inspects and reports on maintained schools, academies, some independent schools, childcare, adoption and fostering agencies and initial teacher training, and regulates early years and children's social care services.

### Education Funding Agency (EFA)

An executive agency which provides funding for the education of 3–19-year-olds, or up to 25 for those with learning disabilities. It also funds and manages buildings and maintenance.

### National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL)

An executive agency responsible for the quality of education and early years workforce. It runs the Schools Direct programme and certifies teaching schools.

### School Teacher's Review Body (STRB)

An advisory non-departmental public body which reviews pay, professional duties and working time of school teachers in England and Wales.

### Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission (SMCPC)

An advisory non-departmental public body which monitors social mobility and child poverty. Jointly sponsored by the Department for Education, Cabinet Office and the Department for Work & Pensions.

### Standards and Testing Agency (STA)

An executive agency which develops the curriculum and sets the tests to assess children in education from early years to the end of key stage 2.

### Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC)

The Children's Commissioner promotes and protects children's rights in England, supported by the OCC, an executive non-departmental public body.